
Bachus Statement During Today's Press Conference Regarding the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act

October 2, 2008

Congressman Spencer Bachus, Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Committee, made the following statement this afternoon in support of an amendment to the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act calling for congressional approval of any expenditures beyond \$250 billion and the elimination of pork-barrel projects added by the Senate:

First, it is my belief that it is prudent to act even if it is unpopular because it is the right thing to do for the American people. As I said on the floor, I will take the political risk, but I will not jeopardize the well-being of the American people, their future and prosperity and that of my children and grandchildren.

In the very first meeting when Secretary Paulson presented his economic stabilization plan, I asked if there were not alternatives that could be considered. The answer was NO.

I was told that the crisis required urgent action and there was no time to consider anything else.

In numerous meetings since that first contact, I have attempted to present alternatives which in each case were rejected in favor of the plan that we have before us today.

As you know, the Secretary somewhat randomly selected \$700 billion as the magic number to solve the financial crisis. We can protect the taxpayer and remain flexible to future requests by the Secretary by authorizing less money up front.

The group joining me here today has drafted an amendment to the existing plan that would allow Secretary Paulson \$250 billion to use as proposed in his plan. For any additional expenditures beyond that initial \$250 billion, he would have to return to Congress for an affirmative approval, not just a veto by Congress. Secretary Paulson has said he can only spend \$50 billion a month.

In addition the bill that came over from the Senate includes a series of pork-barrel projects that are simply unacceptable, not only to me, but to the American people. The amendment we propose deletes that unacceptable pork.

If this amendment is adopted, it will provide Secretary Paulson the funds in an amount as great as he has said that he can expend in an orderly fashion before Congress can reconvene in November. But equally important, it gives us time to explore alternatives.

When we return in November, we will have had 6 weeks of additional experience with the economy and better understand what needs to be done in terms of this economic stabilization program. We can then judge whether to provide additional funding that Secretary Paulson has requested.

In the meantime, I am fully committed to exploring the alternatives that I and my colleagues have already developed. We will also work with outside advisors who have suggestions for addressing the fundamental economic problems plaguing our economy. In November we can present the American people with a program that addresses the real needs and protects taxpayers in the most efficient and effective way which is our responsibility.

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